

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /091 W
-----078359 221538Z /53

P R 221437Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3252
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
USMISSION SINAI
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 6576

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, IS
SUBJ: THE STRUGGLE FOR JEWISH AGENCY PORTFOLIOS AND HERUT

REF: (A) TEL AVIV 5821, (B) TEL AVIV A-75, (C) TEL AVIV 6546

1. SUMMARY: HERUT'S ATTEMPTS TO WIN A KEY POLICY ROLE
IN THE JEWISH AGENCY CONTINUE. HOWEVER, SOLID OPPOSITION
FROM THE AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERSHIP, THE LABOR PARTY, HADASSAH
AND EVEN MANY LIBERALS MAKE THE PLACEMENT OF MORE THAN ONE HERUT
CANDIDATE IN THE FOUR VACANT DEPARTMENTAL PORTFOLIOS VERY
UNLIKELY. AS PART OF THE ESCALATION OF THIS BATTLE, MINISTER
OF AGRICULTURE SHARON HAS ANNOUNCED HIS CANDIDACY TO HEAD
THE SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT. ANOTHER HERUT STRATEGY IS TO NOMINATE
A DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FROM HERUT WHO WOULD SHARE EXECUTIVE RE-
SPONSIBILITY WITH CHAIRMAN DULZIN (LIBERAL). SINCE HERUT
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PROBABLY WILL FAIL TO OBTAIN SATISFACTION, STRAINS WITHIN
THE LIKUD ARE LIKELY TO INCREASE AND TO CREATE A FURTHER
ELEMENT OF TENSION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. AS THE "COMMITTEE OF TEN" MEETS THIS WEEK IN NEW YORK TO
APPROVE THE CANDIDATES FOR THE FOUR JEWISH AGENCY PORTFOLIOS
(SEE REF A), POLITICAL PRESSURES ON BEGIN ARE MOUNTING AGAIN

TO PLACE HERUT CANDIDATES AS HEADS OF THE TREASURY AND THE SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENTS. FURTHERMORE, HERUT WANTS TO HAVE A DECISIVE VOICE IN DETERMINING JEWISH AGENCY POLICY AND DEMANDS THAT BEGIN, IF NECESSARY, IMPOSE A SOLUTION.

3. THE NON-ZIONIST AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES, HAVE JOINED WITH LABOR, HADASSAH, AND EVEN LIBERAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE TO BAR THE APPOINTMENT OF POSSIBLY ALL PROPOSED HERUT CANDIDATES. RAPHAEL KOTLOWITZ MAY BE THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE HERUT NOMINEE (TO HEAD THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT), AND EVEN THAT REMAINS IN DOUBT. AMERICAN RESISTANCE TO ANY HERUT ROLE IN THE AGENCY IS BEING REINFORCED BY RECENT DEMANDS OF MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION ABSORPTION DAVID LEVY (HERUT) AND LIKUD MK HILLEL SEIDEL (AHDUT) THAT IT STOP FINANCING HIAS AND THE JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE, WHOM THEY BLAME FOR HAVING ENCOURAGED THE HIGH DROPOUT RATE IN VIENNA OF SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRANTS SUPPOSEDLY BOUND FOR ISRAEL. THIS IS A LONG-STANDING AND DELICATE ISSUE OF CONTENTION BETWEEN THE ISRAELI AUTHORITIES AND THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY, WHICH WANTS TO PRESERVE FREEDOM OF CHOOSING THEIR DESTINATION FOR SOVIET EMIGRANTS. THE IMPACT OF PRESS REPORTS THAT DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN HAD APPROVED A PLAN PREPARED BY HIS MINISTRY TO BUILD SIX URBAN CENTERS ON THE WEST BANK AND TO PLACE 38,000 FAMILIES IN THEM -- ALTHOUGH NOT NEW AND NOT FINALLY ENDORSED BY THE CABINET (REF C) -- WILL NOT MAKE THE MAERICANS MORE INCLINED TO ACCEPT A HERUT CANDIDATE.

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4. WITH DEPUTY MINISTER YORAM ARIDOR'S CHANCES OF RECEIVING ANY APPOINTMENT VIRTUALLY NIL AND WITH SUPPORT FOR THE INCUMBENT CHAIRMAN OF THE SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENT RA'ANAN WEITZ (LABOR) INCREASING, AGRICULTURE MINISTER ARIK SHARON SUDDENLY ANNOUNCED

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 6576

HIS OWN CANDIDACY FOR THAT POSITION. UNLIKE THE OTHER HERUT CANDIDATES, HE CLEARLY HAS THE NECESSARY EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE JOB. HOWEVER, HIS RECORD IS NOT LIKELY TO MAKE HIM READILY ACCEPTABLE TO THE AMERICANS, ESPECIALLY SINCE SHARON HAS ALREADY DECLARED THAT HE WILL NOT GIVE UP HIS CABINET POST, IF APPOINTED.

5. ON MAY 16 THE KNESSET HERUT FACTION TOLD BEGIN THAT HE MUST BRING HEAVY PRESSURE TO BEAR ON JEWISH AGENCY CHAIRMAN ARYIE DULZIN AND AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERS TO PLACE THE HERUT CANDIDATES AS HEADS OF THE TREASURY AND THE SETTLEMENT DEPARTMENTS. THE MK'S ACCUSED THE DIASPORA LEADERS OF TRYING TO DICTATE THE MAKE-UP OF THE JEWISH AGENCY EXECUTIVE TO SUIT THEIR INTERESTS AND TO IMPOSE THEIR OWN IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT POLICIES ON ISRAEL. THEY CHARGED THAT HERUT WAS BEING EXCLUDED FROM HIGH OFFICES ALTHOUGH IT HAD THE LARGEST BLOCK OF VOTES OF
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ANY PARTY AT THE ZIONIST CONGRESS. THE MK'S TOLD THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THEY WOULD BOYCOTT THE AGENCY IF THE HERUT CANDIDATES LOST. BEGIN TRIED TO REASSURE THE MK'S AND SAID HE WOULD DO ALL HE COULD TO OBTAIN A KEY POLICY ROLE FOR HERUT IN THE AGENCY. HE REPORTEDLY ALSO PROPOSED AS AN ALTERNATIVE THE APPOINTMENT OF A HERUT CANDIDATE AS DEPUTY CHAIRMAN AT DULZIN'S SIDE. SUCH AN APPOINTMENT WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY THE COMMITTEE OF TEN, BUT WOULD BE DECIDED BY THE JEWISH AGENCY ASSEMBLY SCHEDULED TO MEET IN JERUSALEM JUNE 25-29. IT WOULD THUS BE MUCH MORE SUBJECT TO INFLUENCE BY THE PRIME MINISTER. HOWEVER, HERE, TOO, ACCORDING TO JEWISH AGENCY SOURCES, BEGIN'S ABILITY TO DICTATE SUCH A SOLUTION IS BY NO MEANS ASSURED, SINCE MANY LIBERALS ARE NOT OVERLY ANXIOUS TO ACCOMMODATE HERUT BY ANTAGONIZING THE AMERICANS AND UNDERMINING THEIR FUND-RAISING ABILITY.

6. COMMENT: IF HERUT UNEXPECTEDLY WINS SOME OF THE KEY POLICY-MAKING POSITIONS OF THE JEWISH AGENCY, THERE WILL BE TROUBLE. THESE PEOPLE ARE NOT SENSITIVE TO THE INTERESTS OF THE DIASPORA COMMUNITIES (SUCH AS TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR DONATIONS) AND ARE LIKELY TO PRESS FOR A MAJOR REORIENTATION OF THE OPERATIONS AND PRIORITIES OF THE AGENCY. IF, HOWEVER, BEGIN AND HERUT FAIL, THERE WILL BE OTHER PROBLEMS. THE FRUSTRATION OF THE HERUT WING OF THE LIKUD AND THE INTERNAL STRAINS WITHIN THE LIKUD WILL INCREASE. EITHER WAY, AGENCY CHAIRMAN DULZIN IS LIKELY TO BE PLACED IN A VERY DIFFICULT POSITION. SHOULD HE SEE HIMSELF COMPELLED TO YIELD TO BEGIN, THIS WOULD ADD TO THE ALREADY SERIOUS TENSIONS BETWEEN LIBERAL AND HERUT FACTIONS WITHIN THE LIKUD OVER HERUT EFFORTS TO REDUCE LIBERAL INFLUENCE ON BOTH DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY. A LIBERAL DEFEAT WOULD ALSO FURTHER UNDERMINE THE AUTHORITY OF FINANCE MINISTER SIMCHA EHRLICH, THE EMBATTLED CHAIRMAN OF THE LIBERAL PARTY EXECUTIVE WHO HAS BEEN ATTACKED FOR HIS LACK

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OF ASSERTIVENESS IN MATTERS AFFECTING BASIC PARTY PRINCIPLES (REF B).
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Message Attributes

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